



State Representative
Kirk Pearson
39th District

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Capital Budget, *Assistant Ranking Member*

2010 Legislative Review

Dear Friends,

It's great to be home after the extended legislative session to spend time with my family and meet with constituents around the district. I am truly honored to serve as your local representative.

The 60-day regular session was very challenging and there were a lot of late nights. Despite the long hours, majority Democrats could not decide which taxes to increase, so the governor called us back for a 30-day special session. After 30 additional days, the majority party settled on a nearly \$800 million tax package, which includes taxes on canned meats, candy, soda, bottled water, beer and millions in higher taxes on employers.

The supplemental budget dominated the session, but I am pleased to report a number of victories for public safety this year that will better protect citizens.

I hope this brief overview of the 2010 session is helpful to you. Most importantly, my contact information is included on this mailer should you need assistance navigating state agencies or finding state services.

As always, I'm interested in your thoughts and comments on these or other issues of interest to you. If I can be of service, please contact my district office in Sky Valley. It's a pleasure to serve you.

Sincerely,

Rep. Kirk Pearson
District 39



Representative Kirk Pearson • 39th District

2010 legislative session had some hits, misses

MISS: Repealing the Taxpayer Protection Act (I-960)



The voter-approved Initiative 960 was enacted by a statewide vote in 2007. The initiative put in place taxpayer protections, such as requiring the Legislature have a two-thirds vote, or a vote of the people, to pass new and increased taxes. The measure also put in place requirements that voting records on tax legislation be included in voters' pamphlets.

Unfortunately, with Democrats holding sizeable majorities in the Legislature and the governor's office, they passed Senate Bill 6130, which repealed the supermajority vote of the Legislature to raise taxes along with other transparency provisions in I-960. This allowed Democrats the ability to increase taxes by nearly \$800 million with a simple majority vote.

I, along with bipartisan opposition, did not support the repeal of I-960. I believed it was one way to force lawmakers in the majority to work across the aisle to solve the financial issues facing our state.

MISSES: Budget and taxes

Facing a \$2.8 billion budget gap created by overspending at the state level and worsened by the national recession, majority Democrats passed their state supplemental operating budget on the final day of the 30-day special session. To balance out their spending, the majority approved the largest tax increase in state history - nearly \$800 million in new and increased taxes in just this year alone, or nearly \$1.7 billion in the 2011-13 budget.

I joined a bipartisan vote to oppose the budget and tax plan this year. I could not support any tax increases on citizens and struggling employers right now. Families are finding ways to live within their means, and so should government.

Additionally, budget writers forced citizens to sacrifice more of their hard-earned wages, but did not ask any sacrifice of government. The largest solution to the spending gap was tax increases. That simply is not fair when nearly one in nine people in the 39th Legislative District are unemployed.

In the end, the supplemental budget relied on one-time fund shifts, more federal bailout dollars and emptying the last few dollars the poorest among us have in their wallets. The tax package also drained what little investment employers may have had to retain and create jobs. We can and should do better for Washingtonians.

\$800 million tax package hurts families, charities & job creation



Many people in the Legislature said we needed new and higher taxes to prop up government programs, but taxes do not equal compassion. The nearly \$800 million tax increase will hurt the poorest among us the most. Families buying canned meats and vegetables are going to see their food bills go up. This "Spam tax" will hit folks who cannot afford higher taxes.

During the debate on taxes, I brought up the point that when government takes more from citizens, they have less to give to their local charities, such food banks. This has a devastating effect on the many families who rely on non-profit, non-governmental charities to make ends meet.

In addition, the millions in new and higher taxes on employers mean more people will remain out of work. Dollars businesses would use to hire people will now be used to backfill a budget that was too large to begin with. This is no way to treat people who are struggling to make ends meet. I voted "no" on the budget and tax package because I had to stand-up for the working folks in my district and statewide.

MISS: Capital budget dollars raided

Prior to session, I researched what was done in the past to help put people back to work. What I found was enacted during the height of the Great Depression. In 1933, Governor Clarence D. Martin, a Democrat, created the "Emergency Relief Administration," a \$10 million set-aside to create jobs statewide.

It's important to look back at history and see what was successful in difficult times. Gov. Martin did not put us further in debt to fund ongoing entitlements, instead he used our bonding leverage to create jobs and return the investment through higher tax collections from healthy businesses and consumers with good-paying jobs.

Through the years, the Legislature has set money aside in our state capital budget to fund important local projects in communities across the state. These projects have generated countless jobs while building necessary infrastructure. Unfortunately, almost \$1 billion over the last two years has been taken out of the capital budget and transferred to the general fund for one-time uses. Because of this fund raid, we have lost countless family-wage jobs across our state. I will continue to fight future attempts to raid capital budget funds because they are needed even more when times are tough.

2010 Legislative Review

Public safety had a good year

As the House Republican leader on public safety issues, I work hard to ensure laws are put in place that put victims, and potential victims, before felons. This year, several good public safety policies were passed. Here is a breakdown of some of this session's public safety victories:

Lakewood Police Officers' Memorial Act: In response to the tragic murder of four Lakewood police officers, the Legislature passed House Joint Resolution 4220, also known as the Lakewood Police Officers' Memorial Act. I co-sponsored this resolution to better protect officers. Because this is a constitutional amendment, it will be



Rep. Pearson discusses public safety legislation with a fellow House member.

sent to the voters for approval in November. If approved, it would allow judges more discretion to deny bail to suspects facing a life sentence and/or those who are deemed a danger to the community.

Interstate Compact on Mentally Ill Offenders: I introduced House Bill 2533 to address an issue that arose locally. The bill, as signed into law by the governor, allows Washington state to extradite any mentally ill offender to the state where he or she is required to receive mental health treatment as part of the conditions of release from police custody. This is a critical piece of public safety legislation, particularly when other states are attempting to address mentally ill and potentially dangerous offenders.

Cracking down on child exploitation: I co-sponsored House Bill 2424 because our laws need to be updated to reflect the growing use of the Internet to view and pass along photos and other materials depicting minor children in sexually explicit manners. By updating the laws, Washington can more effectively prosecute those viewing and participating in heinous crimes against children. This bill was signed into law March 26.

Addressing repeat domestic abusers: I introduced House Bill 2427 to ensure repeat domestic abusers are given the sentences they have earned. In the end, this measure was tacked onto House Bill 2777, which I also cosponsored. The bill has the same result of creating longer sentences for those abusers who have a pattern of violent assault on partners and family members. My hope is this new law will allow victims of repeated domestic violence time to rebuild their lives without fear. House Bill 2777 was signed into law and takes effect June 10.

Other bills of interest to our communities

MISS: Last year, I introduced House Bill 2195 to address rising credit card interest rates. In the current economy, this consumer protection measure would have revived Washington's restrictions on credit card interest rates. Washington has had a Usury Rate law, which is 12 percent or 4 percent above the Treasury Bill Rate as calculated by the Federal Reserve, since statehood that already allows for this. With job losses mounting, I believe this was the right policy to help struggling citizens right now.

Unfortunately, despite a public hearing on this proposal, it did not make it out of committee. I will continue my work on this issue in future legislative sessions.

HIT: This year, at the request of a constituent, I worked with my House colleagues to introduce House Bill 2739 to address school crossing safety. While the House bill did not move forward, the Senate version, Senate Bill 6363, passed with unanimous support and was signed into law March 29. This measure ensures motorists practice safe driving in school zones, crosswalks and playground speed zones. The bill also allows law enforcement to cite motorists and fine them for infractions in marked areas. I am pleased this important local issue came to light to protect school children around the state. This new law takes effect July 1.



Rep. Pearson gave a civics education presentation at Sedro-Woolley's Mary Purcell Elementary School in January. He explained how a bill becomes a law. Students passed a mock bill addressing safe school playground equipment.

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KEEP IN TOUCH

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My full-time office is available to assist you

In these difficult times, many constituents need assistance navigating a state agency, finding a service or simply finding online resources. If you need assistance, please feel free to call my legislative aide Cameron Bailey at our district office Monday through Thursday, 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. I have a full-service office that can help constituents, including small-business owners, work with Labor and Industries, Department of Social and Health Services or other state agencies. We welcome your questions and concerns.

Looking for work or jobless benefits and services?

There are many online services you can access, such as the state job database at www.careers.wa.gov. Constituents can also access information on unemployment claims and benefits information at www.esd.wa.gov. My office can assist you in finding the right information, so please feel free to call.



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